

In the Claims

1. (Cancelled)

2. (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented method of claim 6, further comprising:

using the at least one intelligent agent to reduce the price of one of the product and the service based upon one of an amount of the product in inventory, a form of payment by the party, a quantity of the product that is to be purchased, a rate at which the product sells, and a location where the product is to be provided to the party.

3. (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented method of claim 6, further comprising:

registering the party with the supplier of one of the product and the service without the party's active involvement provided that the party has not previously registered with the supplier.

4. (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented method of claim 6, further comprising:

performing data mining operations related to the purchase of one of the product and the service.

5. (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented method of claim 6, further comprising:

customizing a secure link between the client and the server based upon at least one preference established by the party.

6. (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented method in which at least one intelligent agent negotiates the purchase of a product or a service on behalf of a party, the computer-implemented method comprising:

configuring the at least one intelligent agent to

determine whether one of the product and the service offered by a supplier satisfies preferences established by the party, and

use personal data associated with the party to customize a price for one of the product and the service, the personal data selected from the group consisting of a historical purchase activity of the party, a potential future purchase activity of the party, and a group to which the party is a member;

dispatching the at least one intelligent agent from a client to a server;

using the at least one intelligent agent to customize the price for one of the product and the service using one of the personal data associated with the party and at least one arbitrary pricing policy; and

authorizing, by a transaction device, the at least one intelligent agent to anonymously purchase one of the product and the service from the supplier, the transaction device providing the authorization through a transaction privacy clearing house (TPCH) without revealing to the supplier an identity of the party, using whose financial account is associated with the transaction device to the supplier.

7. (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented method of claim 6, further comprising:

comparing a price for one of a first product and a first service from a first supplier to a price for one of a second product and a second service from a second supplier.

8. (Cancelled)

9. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 13, further comprising:

means for reducing the price of one of the product and the service by using the at least one intelligent agent based upon one of an amount of the product in inventory, a form of payment by the party, a quantity of the product that is to be purchased, a rate at which the product sells, and a location where the product is to be shipped.

10. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 13, further comprising:

means for registering the party with a supplier by using the at least one intelligent agent without the party's active involvement provided that the party has not previously registered with the supplier.

11. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 13, further comprising:

means for performing data mining operations related to the purchase of one of the product and the service.

12. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 13, further comprising:

means for customizing a secure link between the client and the server based upon at least one preference established by the party.

13. (Currently Amended) An apparatus comprising:

a client coupled to a server, the client adapted to configure and to dispatch to the server at least one intelligent agent to perform a plurality of tasks at the server, the plurality of tasks comprising

a task of determining whether one of the product and the service satisfies preferences established by a party, and

a task of using personal data associated with the party to customize a price for one of the product and the service, the personal data selected from the group consisting of a historical purchase activity of the party, a potential future purchase activity of the party, and a group to which the party is a member;

means for dispatching the at least one intelligent agent from the client to the server;

means for using the at least one intelligent agent to customize the price for one of the product and the service based upon at least one of the personal data associated with the party and an arbitrary pricing policy;

means for purchasing one of the product and the service by using the at least one intelligent agent without disclosing an identity of the party; and

means for authorizing, by a transaction device, the at least one intelligent agent to anonymously purchase one of the product and the service from the supplier, the transaction device providing the authorization through a transaction privacy clearing

house (~~TPCH~~) without revealing to the supplier an identity of the party using whose financial account is associated with the transaction device ~~to the supplier~~.

14-19. (Cancelled)

20. (Previously Presented) The machine readable storage media of claim 24, wherein the method further comprises:

using the intelligent agent to reduce the price of one of the product and the service, based upon one of an amount of the product in inventory, a form of payment by the party, a quantity of the product that is to be purchased, a rate at which the product sells, a location where the product is to be provided to the party.

21. (Previously Presented) The machine readable storage media of claim 24, wherein the method further comprises:

registering the party with the supplier without the party's active involvement provided that the party has not previously registered with the supplier.

22. (Previously Presented) The machine readable storage media of claim 24, wherein the method further comprises:

performing data mining operations related to the purchase of one of the product and the service.

23. (Previously Presented) The machine readable storage media-of claim 24, wherein the method further comprises:

customizing a secure link between the client and the server based upon at least one preference established by the party.

24. (Currently Amended) A machine readable storage media containing executable program instructions which when executed cause a digital processing system to perform a method comprises:

configuring at least one intelligent agent to
determine whether one of the product and the service satisfies preferences established by a party, and

use personal data associated with the party to customize a price for one of the product and the service, the personal data selected from the group consisting of a historical purchase activity of the party, a potential future purchase activity of the party, and a group to which the party is a member;

dispatching the at least one intelligent agent from a client to a server;

using the at least one intelligent agent to customize the price for one of the product and the service using one of the personal data associated with the party and at least one arbitrary pricing policy;

anonymously purchasing by the intelligent agent of one of the product and the service; and

authorizing, by a transaction device, the at least one intelligent agent to anonymously purchase one of the product and the service from the supplier, the transaction device providing the authorization through a transaction privacy clearing house (~~TPCH~~) without revealing to the supplier an identity of the party ~~using whose financial account is associated with the transaction device to the supplier.~~